GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3099
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2016
Security Issues in IT Sector
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any study on the security related issues in the Communication and Information Technology sector and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether there is any mechanism to check the operating systems developed by the private players in the Communication and Information Technology sector?
(c) if so, the details thereof;
(a) whether the Government plans to encourage the open source software; and
(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard so far?

Answer

(a): The area of Communications and Information Technology is characterized by rapid developments and fast changing obsolescence. With every IT product introduced into the market, newer vulnerabilities are discovered, leaving scope for malicious actions. In tune with the dynamic nature of Information Technology and limited window time available for an effective response, continuous efforts are required to be made to detect and prevent cyber attacks by way of continuous threat assessment and near real-time situational awareness. Such timely information enables coordinated actions by the stakeholders to take appropriate proactive and preventive actions.

Accordingly, concerted efforts have been made to harvest the requisite information from multiple sources including Communications & Information Technology sector. These include incidents reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), technical measures, security cooperation arrangement with overseas Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and leading security product and service vendors as well as agencies within the government. In addition, the study reports published by various agencies across the world are also studied to understand the historical data with respect to global threat landscape and threat predictions. As such, Government has not felt the need to conduct a separate study on security related issues.

(b) and (c): The National Cyber Security Policy has laid a clear emphasis on reducing supply chain risks by way of testing infrastructure and facilities for security evaluation of Information Technology products, building trusted relationship with vendors and service providers and enhancing awareness among users with regard to threats and vulnerabilities as well as consequences of security breaches.

In this direction, Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate has established Common Criteria (CC) test lab for security evaluation of IT products including Operating Systems. With the result, India is now recognized as a certification producing country as part of the Global Common Criteria Recognition Agreement (CCRA). Following this, security evaluations done in India are acceptable among all the CCRA nations without the need for further testing.

(d) and (e): Government has taken many initiatives for encouraging the open source software, which are as follows:

i. "Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software for Government of India" has been notified in March, 2015 as part of Digital India Initiative to encourage the formal adoption and use of Open Source Software (OSS) in Government organizations.
ii. The Department has implemented various projects like National Resource Centre for Free & Open Source Software (NRCFOSS), Open Technology Centre (OTC) and Establishment of Support Centres during last few years, which have led to development of various Open Source Software and capacity building in area of Open Source Software.
iii. Indigenous GNU/Linux based Operating System- "Bharat Operating System Solutions (BOSS)" with Indian languages support has been brought out by NRCFOSS, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Chennai. BOSS is available in Desktop, Server and educational version EduBOSS. BOSS has been released under GPL (General Public License) and is available for free download at http://bosslinux.in. Support Centres have been set up for popularization and adoption of BOSS/ EduBOSS. CDAC has also developed Secured BOSS which is being deployed in strategic sector.
iv. Communication has been sent to all State Governments and UTs for possible deployment of BOSS / EduBOSS. BOSS has been successfully deployed in education, government and defense sectors in various States including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Orissa, Tripura, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Current installed base of BOSS and its variants is around 32 lakhs.

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